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ASIAN STUDIES INQUIRY PROGRAM

# Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution



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# Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution

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**Social Studies Inquiry Program**

Richard Gross and John Michaelis, Directors





ASIAN STUDIES INQUIRY PROGRAM

# Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution

**David L. Weitzman**

Department Chairman  
Oakland Technical High School  
University of California  
Demonstration Secondary School

**John U. Michaelis**

**Robin J. McKeown**

Coordinators  
Asian Studies Inquiry Program

Co-Directors  
Asian Studies Curriculum Project  
University of California, Berkeley

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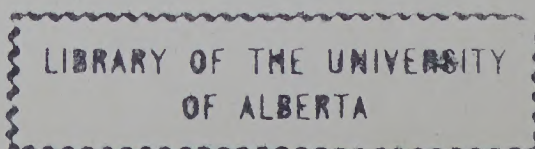
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The term “revolution” troubles many Americans; we are a little afraid of the process, often violent, which results in the replacement of existing social, political, and economic ideas and institutions with new ones. Perhaps it is because we are a relatively stable society, or maybe it is because we tend to think of revolutions only in terms of the terrorism, violence, and destruction which is inevitable when emotions are aroused and exploited. The fact remains, however, that we too experienced revolution, a social revolution which still is not completed and has not been pursued without considerable violence. We remember our revolution with great pride, recalling the words and deeds of great leaders and personalities such as Thomas Paine, Patrick Henry, or George Washington. We express considerable excitement over accounts of destroying British tea in Boston Harbor, the Boston Massacre, routing British troops at Lexington and Concord, and other acts of heroic defiance. Ironically, our fear of revolution today has resulted in our being considered by many people throughout the world as reactionary, out of touch with the passions, fears, aspirations, and dreams of people who, like ourselves only a few generations ago, find revolution the only means of achieving their ends.

This unit is about another revolution, beginning somewhere in the 1800's and, like our own, continuing even today. Revolutions bring an end to the old regime, but, more important, they signal the beginnings of new and exciting developments in a nation's history. Just as

the American Revolution did not end with the surrender of the British at Yorktown, the Chinese Revolution did not end with the abdication of the Manchu emperor in 1912. Americans went on to face new problems: the Critical Period and Shays' Rebellion, the quarrels and antagonisms which seemed to threaten the Constitution, states' rights issues and the Civil War, the American industrial revolution and the violence of the labor movement, and, today, the civil rights movements. The Chinese, too, faced new “revolutions” after the initial success of the 1911 Revolution. Today they recall each successful step with pride and retell the experiences of their great revolutionary leaders. But our attitudes toward revolution prevent us from viewing these events as normal post-revolutionary developments during which a nation seeks its own stability and identity, experiments with unfamiliar political and social forms, finds compromises between the traditional and the modern, and adjusts to new feelings of nationalism and independence. Rather we tend to view each change as threatening, uncivilized, and somehow unnecessary. In short, we have forgotten.

The readings which follow—eyewitness accounts, documents, and observations of scholars—have been chosen to assist you in gaining insight into the causes and characteristics of revolutions, especially the Chinese Revolution. They trace the developments of the continuing revolution in China—one which has caused great concern and fear in the United States—and provide answers to some fundamental

questions about that revolution. What caused the downfall of the Manchu dynasty? What was the nature of the political and social ideas which emerged from the 1911 Revolution? How successful were the 1911 and subsequent revolutions? Why were the Chinese unable to reconcile the differences between their two political parties, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party? Who were Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and Mao Tse-tung, and what were their roles in the continuing revolution in China? Why were Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communists ultimately successful in their revolution? What is the nature of Chinese Communism?





## Famine

The observer in traditional China could not help but be stricken by the material poverty and despair of the peasants. Between the years 108 B.C. and A.D. 1911, Chinese historians recorded 1,828 famines, or approximately one every year. Starvation and death, the norm in China for three thousand years, were as much a part of life as the rising and setting of the sun. One famine which ravaged ten northern provinces between 1876 and 1879 resulted in the death of 15 to 20 million people, a number greater than the total populations of California or New York. Among the Westerners who observed the dreadful effects of the famine was missionary Timothy Richard who recalls Shansi Province in his diary in 1878:

*January 28, 1878.*

Started on a journey south through the centre of the province to discover the severity of the famine. I rode on a mule, and had a servant with me, also on a mule.

Before leaving the city we could not go straight to the south gate, as there was a man lying in the street about to die of starvation, and a crowd had gathered round.

*January 29th. 140 li south.*

Passed four dead men on the road and another moving on his hands and knees, having no strength to stand up. Met a funeral, consisting of a mother carrying on her shoulder a dead boy of ten years

old. She was the only bearer, priest, and mourner, and she laid him in the snow outside the city wall.

*January 30th. 270 li south.*

Passed two men apparently just dead. One had good clothes on, but had died of hunger. A few *li* farther there was a man of about forty walking in front of us, with unsteady steps like a drunken man. A puff of wind blew him over to rise no more.

*January 30th. 290 li south.*

Saw fourteen dead on the roadside. One had only a stocking on. His corpse was being dragged by a dog, so light it was. Two of the dead were women. They had

<sup>†</sup>Timothy Richard, *Forty-five Years in China. Reminiscences by T. Richard* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916).



had a burial, but it had consisted only in turning the faces to the ground. The passers-by had dealt more kindly with one, for they had left her her clothes. A third corpse was a feast to a score of screaming crows and magpies. There were fat pheasants, rabbits, foxes, and wolves, but men and women had no means of living. One old man beside whom I slowly climbed a hill said most pathetically: "Our mules and donkeys are all eaten up. Our labourers are dead. What crime have we committed, that God should punish us thus?"

*February 1st. 450 li south.*

Saw six dead bodies in half a day, and four of them were women: one in an open shed, naked but for a string round her waist; another in a stream; one in the water, half exposed above the ice at the mercy of wild dogs; another half clad in rags in one of the open caves at the roadside; another half eaten, torn by birds and beasts of prey. Met two youths of about eighteen years of age, tottering on their feet, and leaning on sticks as if ninety years of age. Met another young man carrying his mother on his shoulders as her strength had failed. Seeing me looking at them closely, the young man begged for help. This is the only one who has begged since I left T'ai-yuan fu.

Saw men grinding soft stones, somewhat like those from which stone pencils are made, into powder, which was sold for from two to three cash per *catty* (1½ lb.) to be mixed with any grain, or grass seed, or roots and made into cakes. I tried some of these cakes, and they tasted like what most of them were—clay. Many died of constipation in consequence of eating them.

*February 2nd. 530 li south.*

At the next city was the most awful sight I ever saw. It was early in the morning when I approached the city gate. On one side of it was a pile of naked dead men, heaped on top of each other as though they were pigs in a slaughter-house. On the other side of the gate was a similar heap of dead women, their clothing having been taken away to pawn for food. Carts were there to take the corpses away to two great pits, into one of which they threw the men, and into the other the women.

For many miles in this district the trees were all white, stripped clean for ten or twenty feet high of their bark, which was being used for food. We passed many houses without doors and window-frames, which had been sold as firewood. Inside were kitchen utensils left untouched only because they could not be turned into money. The owners had gone away and died.

*February 4th. 630 li south.*

Having gone so far, and seeing such terrible sights, I decided to return to T'ai-yuan fu, as I had sufficient proofs of the horrors of famine to move hearts of stone.

Even the wolves were becoming fearless. Seeing a wolf by the roadside one day, I yelled at him, expecting him to flee in terror. On the contrary, he stood and stared at me, as if wondering at my boldness in facing him.

Returning along the same road, we had a daily repetition of the same ghastly sights, until I sometimes wondered whether the scenes were not the imagination of a disordered mind.

## The Peasant

China is peasants; hundreds of millions of lean, hungry farmers form the vast lower stratum of society. This fact, coupled with China's historical dependence on agriculture, has made the peasant the single most important factor determining the economic, political, and social condition of the country. The peasant farmer's status in such a society is the barometer with which the success or failure of a revolution or a government is measured. The condition of the peasant farmer is the subject of this eyewitness account by American author Theodore H. White, who describes a life that has remained essentially unchanged for centuries.

The village is a cluster of adobe huts and shelters. If it is a large village, there is a wall of mud and rubble round it; a small village consists of ten or twelve houses clustered close to each other for protection. In a prosperous village the walls of the adobe huts are whitewashed, and green trees shade the larger houses; a poor village—and most of them are poor—is a mass of crumbling weathered yellows and browns. The homes have no ceilings but the raftered roofs; they have no floors but the beaten earth. Their windows are made of greased paper, admitting so little light that the inner recesses are always dim. In his house the peasant stores his grain; in it he keeps his animals at night; in it is the ancestral shrine that he venerates. . . .

Men and women come together in the village to produce children, till the land, and raise crops. The unity of man, village, and field is total and rigid. All the work is done by hand, from the sowing of the rice grains in early spring, through the laborious transplanting of the tufts in water-filled paddies in late spring, to the final harvesting by sickle in the fall. The Chinese farmer does not farm; he gardens. He, his wife, and his children pluck out the weeds one by one. He hoards his family's night soil through all the months of the year; in the spring he ladles out of mortar pits huge stinking buckets of dark green liquid offal, and carefully, without wasting a drop, he spreads the life-giving nitrogen among his vegetables and plants.

<sup>†</sup>Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1946).



When harvest time comes, the whole family goes out to the field to bring in the grain. The family helps him thresh his grain, either by monotonously beating it with a flail or by guiding animals that draw huge stone rollers round and round in a circle over the threshing floor. All life is attached to the soil; the peasant works at it, eats of it, returns to it all that his body excretes, and is finally himself returned to the soil.

Certain basic differences exist between the Chinese farmer and the farmer of America. The Chinese peasant's acres are pocket-handkerchief plots. The average Chinese farm, including those of the sparsely populated northwest, is less than four acres; in some of the densely settled provinces of the south and west the average is between one and one and a half acres per farm. Even this meager morsel is poorly laid out, for it consists of scattered strips and bits here and there, and the farmer must walk from one of these to another to serve each in turn. The average farmer has few animals. He cannot spare precious grain for feeding pigs or beef cattle or precious meadow land for dairy products. He may have one or two pigs, but these, like his chickens, feed on kitchen scraps. If he is well off, he may have an ox or buffalo to pull his plow, but most farmers with their small holdings cannot afford even that.

The farmer himself is uneducated. He is illiterate, and full of superstitions and habit ways that make it difficult to reach him by print. His horizons are close drawn. Off the main highways transportation is as tedious as it was a thousand years ago; the people he sees and talks to all live within a day's walk of his birthplace and think as

he does. His techniques are primitive. He knows little of proper seed selection, and till recently his government has done little to improve seed strains; he knows nothing about combating plant diseases; his sickles, crude plows, flails, and stone rollers are like those his forefathers used. Frugality governs all his actions. He gathers every wisp of grass and twists it together for fuel. He sows beans or vegetables on the narrow ridges that separate one paddy field from another, so that no square foot of growing land is lost. He weaves hats, baskets, and sandals out of rice straw; out of the pig's bladder he makes a toy balloon for the children; every piece of string, every scrap of paper, every rag is saved.

Last and most important, the yield of his back-breaking labor is pitifully small. Although the yield per acre is fair—80 to 90 per cent of what the American farmer gets from the same amount of land—the yield is miserably small in terms of man-hours, in terms of mouths and human lives. One American farmer with his machines, draft animals, good seeds, and broad acres will produce fifteen pounds of grain each year while the Chinese farmer is producing one. This means that the Chinese farmer is constantly at war with starvation; he and his family live in the shadow of hunger. . . .

What binds all these people together is not so much their common culture, common language, or common traditions as it is their subjection to a poverty and ignorance that knows no counterpart in the Western world. It is their life in squalid huts, the close-cramped rooms with earthen floors, the diseases of filth and malnutrition, the cold of winter, the monotonous food. Out of this searing

crucible of want, the back bent by the stooping transplantation of rice, the loins broken by the constant bearing of children, comes the desperate struggle of all Chinese to live, to scratch up enough for an existence above the line of misery. You can see the entire tragedy in any village street in China. You see the ripe girls as they approach the age of marriage—cheeks abloom, dark hair glistening with health, sturdy bodies full of life; you see also their sisters ten or twelve years older, their eyes tired, their bodies stooped, their breasts and bellies flaccid from exhaustion and childbearing—already old, for the life of

China has consumed them. . . .

The substratum of this life is emotional starvation. Since most of the peasants are illiterate, they can enjoy neither books nor newspapers. They have no moving pictures, no radios. Their lives are conditioned by rumor, and almost anything will serve to fill the great vacuum their boredom produces. The village fairs are as much social as economic institutions. During the idle season of the fields people gather at the booths and gossip, watch magicians, listen to story-tellers. Sometimes a touring troupe of actors will pass through a district to show an ancient class-

*In old China, peasants would often hitch themselves to the plow to make up for a shortage of draft animals.*





ical drama; the performance will be discussed and criticized for days afterward even by those who have not the remotest idea of what the archaic words meant or what the involved symbolism represented. . . .

The weight of ignorance and labor is only part of the burden the Chinese peasant bears; there is also the weight of a social system as antique as his ideas and superstitions. The peasant's relation to the land is conditioned by those who control the land. It is characteristic of China's present social state that this, the most overwhelming of all her problems, should completely lack adequate statistics. Some people estimate—but very roughly—that 30 per cent of China's peasants are part tenants and part freeholders, another 30 per cent are tenants or landless farm hands, and 40 per cent own the land they till. This analysis is very shaky. The pressure on the tenant and the small owner is far different from the pressure in American rural life. Chinese landlords rackrent their fields to the last possible grain. On good lands they demand from 50 to 60 per cent of the crops; in some areas, including Chungking, they take up to 80 per cent of the cash crops. In districts where land ownership is highly concentrated, the great landlord may conduct himself as a baron with his own armed retainers, his ruthless rent-collecting agents, and his serfs—the tenant farmers.

The small owner is frequently little better off than the tenant. Anyone may tax him and usually does. He must bear the heavy load of government exactions, the petty pilferings of all the local officials, and the demands of army officers who may be stationed in his district. Even the sol-

diers feel free to demand pigs, meat, and food of him when passing through his district. Every farmer needs credit at some time or other, and credit in China may reduce the farmer who nominally owns his land to the status of farm laborer for his creditor. A loan—for seeds, tools, family emergencies—enmeshes the farmer in the web of usury. Despite all government efforts to break the system in the villages, credit still remains in the hands of the village pawnbrokers and loan sharks—often the same men who are the large landlords. Interest rates run from 30 to 60 per cent a year and higher. . . .

Appeal by the peasant against the oligarchy that rules him is useless. The local government to which he must appeal against iniquitous taxes, usurious interest, common police brutality, is by its very constitution the guardian of the groups that crush him. . . .

The ancient trinity of landlord, loan shark, and merchant is a symbol hated throughout Chinese history. It represents a system that has shackled China's development for five centuries. During the last century, however, the system has tightened about the Chinese peasant as never before because of the impact of the West, by commerce and violence, on its timeworn apparatus. Concentration of landholding had usually been stimulated in olden times by famine, flood, or disaster, when the peasant was forced to sell or mortgage his lands to meet his emergency needs. But the impact of Western commerce created new forms of liquid wealth in China and concentrated it in the hands of the relatively minute number of go-betweens of Western industry and the Chinese market. . . .

## City Life

In the early 1900's over four-fifths of China's population were peasants cultivating their small plots. But millions of laborers, small shopkeepers, street urchins, and peddlers who crowded into bustling Chinese cities also experienced famine, disease, and early death. For generations their life, like that of the peasant farmer, remained unimproved and unchanged. Illiterate and hopelessly poor, alienated from the corrupt and crumbling monarchy of China's last dynasty, they remained beyond reach. The scene described by French journalist Jean Rodes is Canton in 1910 and is typical of the urban condition.

The main impression one brings back after having visited that city is of having wandered around in a vast sewer. . . . A broad drain runs along every street, but since it is never cleaned out, the dirty water which people pour into it through small holes dug before their doors remains stagnant, and the stench rising from it is even more nauseating because the sticky paving stones covering the drain are ill-joined or shaky and near the point of collapse. Here and there, special jars that are but rarely removed overflow with fermented urine that soaks the ground and poisons the air. All day long, coolies make their way through the crowd, carrying a pole on their shoulders, at each end of which hang wooden vessels filled with feces. Foul stenches rise from aging heaps

of refuse piled up on every corner. A filthy canal, full of all sorts of objects stuck in its murky and stinking mud, winds its way through the city. From the shaky houses, dripping with squalor, that are built on the very edges of this canal, thus seeming to squat along a dung pit, comes a steady flow of refuse. I crossed the canal several times, while holding my nose. The bridges spanning it have stairways, whose steps are crowded with hideous beggars harassing the many passers-by with their ceaseless wailing. . . .

Preceded by the warning cries of the carriers and advancing with astounding speed, my chair ran along endless furrows which opened through the seething crowds and, like a ship's prow, ploughed through the throng of pedestrians amidst the rhyth-

<sup>†</sup> Roger Pélissier, *The Awakening of China, 1793–1949* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1967).



mical yelps of the coolies bent under their bamboo poles.

Altars dedicated to the protecting spirits stand at the street entrances. Their double row of black lacquered tablets bearing golden inscriptions give them a singularly exotic yet religious appearance. In small niches near the entrance of shops, sticks of sandalwood burn in order to keep off malignant spirits. In the shops, where both owners and clerks look as impassive and smooth as priests, lights burn in front of the ancestors' altar. Some façades, gilded and wrought like precious jewelry, look like rich sanctuaries. . . .

Going further, one sees dirty butcher's shops, grill rooms with lacquered and shining ducks displayed, and cheap restaurants. The ground is soaked with muddy water, spittle, and blood. When I passed that area, the air was especially heavy with rancid kitchen smells, and odors of incense and opium, because all the people were joyously getting ready for the New Year's festivities. The walls were being covered with the traditional formulas of happiness, and over their doors people were hanging up large new lanterns painted with shining fish paste, and bearing red and black signs of longevity.

*Their plight ignored by the rulers, millions of Chinese starved in the pre-revolutionary days.*



## The Pleasures of Life

For centuries a minority of scholar-officials, merchants, and artisans controlled the ignorant, poor, and helpless peasants, finding justification for their power in the writings of Confucius, who admonished China's rulers to "deal with the common people as though you were officiating at an important rite. Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you." Lin Yutang provides a glimpse into the affairs of the traditional leisure class.

Given extensive leisure, what do not the Chinese do? They eat crabs, drink tea, taste spring water, sing operatic airs, fly kites, play shuttle-cock, match grass blades, make paper boxes, solve complicated wire puzzles, play *mahjong*, gamble and pawn clothing, stew *ginseng*, watch cock-fights, romp with their children, water flowers, graft fruits, play chess, take baths, hold conversations, keep cagebirds, take afternoon naps, have three meals in one, guess fingers, play at palmistry, gossip about fox spirits, go to operas, beat drums and gongs, play the flute, practise on calligraphy, munch duck-gizzards, fly eagles, feed carrier pigeons, quarrel with their tailors, visit temples, climb mountains, watch boat races, gather at street corners, shout at aeroplanes, fulminate against the Japanese, wonder at the white people, criticize their politicians, read Buddhist classics, practise deep-breathing, consult fortune

tellers, burn rare incense, solve literary riddles, kow-tow to one another, produce children, and sleep.

This ancient geniality is best reflected in the Chinese familiar essay, *hsiaop'inwen*, which is the product of the Chinese spirit at play. The pleasures of a leisurely life are its eternal themes. Its subject matter covers the art of drinking tea, the carving of seals and the appreciation of the cuts and the quality of the stones, boating on the lake, climbing historically famous mountains, visiting ancient beauties' tombs, composing poetry under the moon and looking at a storm on a high mountain — all written in a style leisurely and chatty and suave, as disarmingly hospitable as a friend's chat by the fireside and as poetically disorderly as the recluse's dress, a style trenchant and yet mellow, like good old wine. And through it all pervades the spirit of man happy with himself.

†Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People* (New York: John Day Co., 1939).





## Genesis of a Communist I

The Chinese could not be blamed for their condition. It was impossible for adults and elders, formed in a Confucian mold, believing in the absolute correctness of a way of life which had stood for centuries, and suspicious of Western technology and science, to deal effectively with the immense problems which faced them. The government, too, was unable to act. Weak, irresolute measures, calculated more to appease angry peasants and growing demands for reform than to alleviate basic problems, were the only answers the corrupt and then ineffectual Manchu government had for the continuing cycle of famine, starvation, disease, squalor, illiteracy, and foreign aggression. A new generation of Chinese youth, trained in traditional ways but armed with Western ideas, broke away from stifling Confucian conservatism and headed in a new direction. Mao Tse-tung was just such a youth, and in many ways the life which he describes to American author Edgar Snow is representative of millions of young Chinese then.

"I was born in the village of Shao Shan, in Hsiang T'an Hsien, Hunan province, in 1893. My father's name was Mao Jen-shêng, and my mother's maiden name was Wen Ch'i-mei.

"My father was a poor peasant and while still young was obliged to join the army because of heavy debts. He was a soldier for many years. Later on he returned to the village where I was born, and by saving carefully and gathering together a little money through small trading and

other enterprise he managed to buy back his land.

"As middle peasants then my family owned fifteen *mou* of land. On this they could raise sixty *tan* of rice a year. The five members of the family consumed a total of thirty-five *tan*—that is, about seven each—which left an annual surplus of twenty-five *tan*. Using this surplus, my father accumulated a little capital and in time purchased seven more *mou*, which gave the family the status of 'rich' peasants.

†Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968).



We could then raise eighty-four *tan* of rice a year. . . .

"I began studying in a local primary school when I was eight and remained there until I was thirteen years old. In the early morning and at night I worked on the farm. During the day I read the Confucian Analects and the Four Classics. My Chinese teacher belonged to the stern-treatment school. He was harsh and severe, frequently beating his students. Because of this I ran away from the school when I was ten. . . .

"My father wanted me to begin keeping the family books as soon as I had learned a few characters. He wanted me to learn to use the abacus. As my father insisted upon this I began to work at those accounts at night. He was a severe taskmaster. He hated to see me idle, and if there were no books to be kept he put me to work at farm tasks. He was a hot-tempered man and frequently beat both me and my brothers. He gave us no money whatever, and the most meagre food. On the 15th of every month he made a concession to his labourers and gave them eggs with their rice, but never meat. To me he gave neither eggs nor meat.

"My mother was a kind woman, generous and sympathetic, and ever ready to share what she had. She pitied the poor and often gave them rice when they came to ask for it during famines. But she could not do so when my father was present. He disapproved of charity. We had many quarrels in my home over this question. . . .

"My father had had two years of schooling and he could read enough to keep books. My mother was wholly illiterate. Both were from peasant families. I was the family 'scholar.' I knew the Classics,

but disliked them. What I enjoyed were the romances of Old China, and especially stories of rebellions. I used to read them in school, covering them up with a Classic when the teacher walked past. So also did most of my schoolmates. We learned many of the stories almost by heart, and discussed and re-discussed them many times. We knew more of them than the old men of the village, who also loved them and used to exchange stories with us. I believe that perhaps I was much influenced by such books, read at an impressionable age.

"I finally left the primary school when I was thirteen and began to work long hours on the farm, helping the hired labourer, doing the full labour of a man during the day and at night keeping books for my father. Nevertheless, I succeeded in continuing my reading, devouring everything I could find except the Classics. This annoyed my father, who wanted me to master the Classics, especially after he was defeated in a lawsuit due to an apt Classical quotation used by his adversary in the Chinese court. I used to cover up the window of my room late at night so that my father would not see the light. In this way I read a book called *Words of Warning* (Shen Shih Wei-yen), which I liked very much. The authors, a number of old reformist scholars, thought that the weakness of China lay in her lack of Western appliances—railways, telephones, telegraphs and steamships—and wanted to have them introduced into the country. My father considered such books a waste of time.

"*Words of Warning* stimulated in me a desire to resume my studies. I had also become disgusted with my labour on the farm. My father naturally opposed this. We quarrelled about it, and finally I ran

away from home. I went to the home of an unemployed law student, and there I studied for half a year. After that I studied more of the Classics under an old Chinese scholar, and also read many contemporary articles and a few books.

"At this time an incident occurred in Hunan which influenced my whole life. Outside the little Chinese school where I was studying, we students noticed many bean merchants, coming back from Changsha. We asked them why they were all leaving. They told us about a big uprising in the city.

"There had been a severe famine that year, and in Changsha thousands were without food. The starving sent a delegation to the civil governor, to beg for relief, but he replied to them haughtily, 'Why haven't you food? There is plenty in the city. I always have enough.' When the people were told the governor's reply, they became very angry. They held mass meetings and organized a demonstration. They attacked the Manchu yamen, cut down the flagpole, the symbol of office, and drove out the governor. Following this, the Commissioner of Internal Affairs, a man named Chang, came out on his horse and told the people that the Government would take measures to help them. Chang was evidently sincere in his promise, but the Emperor disliked him and accused him of having intimate connections with 'the mob.' He was removed. A new governor arrived, and at once ordered the arrest of the leaders of the uprising. Many of them were beheaded and their heads displayed on poles as a warning to future 'rebels.'

"This incident was discussed in my school for many days. It made a deep im-

pression on me. Most of the other students sympathized with the 'insurrectionists,' but only from an observer's point of view. They did not understand that it had any relation to their own lives. They were merely interested in it as an exciting incident. I never forgot it. I felt that there with the rebels were ordinary people like my own family and I deeply resented the injustice of the treatment given to them.

"Another influence on me at this time was the presence in a local primary school of a 'radical' teacher. He was 'radical' because he was opposed to Buddhism, and wanted to get rid of the gods. He urged people to convert their temples into schools. He was a widely discussed personality. I admired him and agreed with his views.

"But about this time I heard of an unusual new school and made up my mind to go there, despite my father's opposition. This school was in Hsiang Hsiang *hsien* (county), where my mother's family lived. A cousin of mine was a student there and he told me of the new school and of the changing conditions in 'modern education.' There was less emphasis on the Classics, and more was taught of the 'new knowledge' of the West. The educational methods, also, were quite 'radical.'

"This was the first time I had been as far away from home as fifty *li*. I was sixteen years old.

"In the new school I could study natural science and new subjects of Western learning.

"I made good progress at this school. The teachers liked me, especially those who taught the Classics, because I wrote good essays in the Classical manner. But



my mind was not on the Classics. I was reading two books sent to me by my cousin, telling of the Reform movement of K'ang Yu-wei. One was called the *Journal of the New People* (*Hsin Min Chung Pao*), and was edited by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao. I read and re-read these until I knew them by heart.

"I recall also that at this time I first heard that the Emperor and Tzu Hsi, the Empress Dowager, were both dead, although the new Emperor, Hsuan T'ung, had already been ruling for two years. I was not yet an anti-monarchist; indeed, I considered the Emperor as well as most officials to be honest, good and clever men. They only needed the help of K'ang Yu-wei's reforms. I was fascinated by accounts of the rulers of ancient China: Yao, Shun, Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, and Han Wu-ti, and read many books about them. I also learned something of foreign history at this time, and of geography. I had first heard of America in an article which told of the American Revolution and contained a sentence like this: 'After eight years of difficult war, Washington won victory and built up his nation.' In a book called *Great Heroes of the World*, I read also of Napoleon, Catherine of Russia, Peter the Great, Wellington, Gladstone, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Lincoln."

Mao Tse-tung continued: "I began to long to go to Changsha, the great city, the capital of the province, which was 120 *li* from my home. It was said that this city was very big, contained many, many people, numerous schools, and the yamen of the governor. It was a magnificent place altogether! I wanted very much to go there at this time, and enter the middle school for Hsiang Hsiang people.

"In Changsha I read my first newspaper, the *People's Strength* (*Min Li Pao*), a nationalist revolutionary journal which told of the Canton Uprising against the Manchu dynasty and the death of the Seventy-two Heroes, under the leadership of a Hunanese, named Wang Hsing. I was most impressed with this story and found the *Min Li Pao* full of stimulating material. It was edited by Yü Yu-jen, who later became a famous leader of the Kuomintang. I learned also of Sun Yat-sen at this time, and of the program of the T'ung Meng Hui. The country was on the eve of the First Revolution."

## Revolution

On October 11, 1911, Hsiung Ping-k'un, a soldier assigned to the engineering battalion stationed in Wu-ch'ang shot and killed his commanding officer. With this first shot of the Revolution the entire battalion rose in revolt. Within 48 days the uprising spread throughout fourteen provinces, and 81 days after the initial incident in Wu-ch'ang the Chinese Republic had been proclaimed and Dr. Sun Yat-sen elected the provisional president. On February 12, 1912, the Manchu emperor issued an edict announcing his abdication, thus marking the end of Manchu domination and the end of monarchy in China. To examine the complicated chain of events that followed immediately upon the Revolution is beyond the scope of this study, but Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell summarize for us the successes, failures, and effects of the overthrow of China's last dynasty and the beginnings of the Republic.

If there is one word to describe China since 1911, it is revolution. Revolution is the sweeping away of an old order—an ancient political system, a traditional culture, an uncreative economy, a ruling class which only exploits, and a system of social organization which no longer satisfies men. China has undergone all these revolutions.

During the nineteenth century, China slowly gathered momentum for change. Chinese society started to break down for internal reasons. The gentry and officials, complacent in their centuries-old position

of dominance, became indifferent to stagnation, poverty, and disaffection in Inland China. When revolts broke out, they suppressed them, attempting to alleviate the situation by temporary and superficial reforms. The arrival of Western imperialism further discredited the dynasty and its ruling classes—they could only acquiesce impotently to the humiliation forced on them. In 1911 the dynasty fell, and thus began the period in Chinese history known as Republican China. China at last had her revolution. For a brief time

<sup>†</sup> Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell, *Republican China: Nationalism, War, and the Rise of Communism, 1911–1949* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967).



optimism ran high, but as we know now the demise of the Manchu Dynasty was only the beginning of a long and agonizing period of revolutionary change in China which has not yet ended.

There is little in America's revolutionary heritage which could help us understand the extent and depth of the Chinese Revolution. We drove the foreigner from our soil, and his sympathizers fled to Canada. Our revolution could be compared to the 1911 Revolution in China, but whereas we quickly achieved stable nationhood, China continued on the path of her larger revolution. We never experienced a cultural revolution in which people turned on their heritage. We do not know what a social revolution is, in which people kill their national and local leaders with hatred born of centuries of wrongs. The French underwent such a revolution and recall it to this day.

1911 was only the beginning for China. A new kind of government came into being, but Chinese society remained unchanged. It meant little to the peasant who struggled for subsistence or to the local landlords and officials who continued to rule as before, except that now they owed loyalty to presidents, generals, and warlords. In the new cities foreigners still enjoyed their special privileges, and foreign gunboats still patrolled the Yangtze River. Nonetheless, the 1911 Revolution finally set China in motion toward a different future. China's future leaders were then young men passionately convinced that only if she were totally transformed could China resume her rightful position of greatness in the world.

To transform a society so vast as China and so bound to the past was an awesome

ambition. China's early revolutionary leaders, like Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, talked about revolution, but it is doubtful that they knew how great a revolution China needed before she could cut herself from the past. Sun Yat-sen gave China revolutionary ideals, but his successor, Chiang Kai-shek, concentrated only on power.

We in America are afraid of radical revolution, and our fear prevents us from understanding it when it occurs in other countries. The histories of America and China are very different. Both are proud nations, but America never had to surrender pieces of her territory to foreign rulers. Both are proud peoples, but white Americans have never been labeled an inferior race. Though we have borrowed from abroad, we have always owned the means of our wealth. We have never seen our country fragmented and ruled by absurd warlords who kept themselves in power by looting the population. Aside from our black population, few Americans know what it is to live in a class society in which the great majority of the population is forever condemned to inferior status (though a few may rise). It is difficult for us to understand the frustration and humiliation of a young Chinese intellectual who sees his country abused by foreigners or who is paternally lectured to by foreigners conscious of their own superiority. How can we understand the hatred of a peasant for landlords, officials, and village teachers who deprived him of his dignity, since, after all, he was not a gentleman? Only in the American south do conditions exist which somewhat resemble those of old China. We would do well to remember that it was not always poverty or



*Chiang Kai-shek was head of the Nationalist Party and the most powerful man in China from the 1920's until 1949 when the Communists took over. He was then driven off the mainland of China to the island of Formosa where he established his headquarters.*



economic deprivation which were the causes of revolt in China: the peasant revolted against indignity—a grievance the gentry found very difficult to understand.

The 1911 Revolution which created the Republic set China slowly in motion again after a period of passivity and uncertainty. The revolutionary movement had sired a new breed of intellectuals and leaders who had no patience with the traditionalist hair splitters and their abstract arguments over Chinese spirit and Western substance, and no interest in saving Chinese traditions or Confucianism. Fervent nationalists working for the salvation of their country and its people, and not its archaic culture, China's new youth was a group of iconoclasts who looked forward to the future rather than backward to the past: they were the makers of a new China.

We have called this period revolution and regeneration. China's new leaders were revolutionaries dedicated to the overthrow of the old order and to leading China out of degradation. These young revolutionaries were also searching for a new moral order based on new ideas, for they were convinced that China had to be reborn, that her ancient values and ideas had to be totally replaced by others more able to meet the modern world's challenges.

Sun Yat-sen's Kuomintang overthrew the dynasty and created the Republic, but as we can see from the period of warlordism that followed, the Republic failed to become that workable new order for which the revolutionaries had fought. It had been relatively simple to bring down the tottering Manchu Dynasty, but it proved difficult to replace it with new institutions, ideals, and leadership. The young revolutionaries quickly realized that

the 1911 Revolution was only the first step in a long process of rebuilding Chinese society.

Before new ideologies could take root in China, the vast residue of tradition which persisted despite the 1911 Revolution had to be destroyed. The 1911 Revolution had not changed the bases of the traditional social order: classical education, suppression of women, family system. The new intellectuals called for a total purge of tradition, while simultaneously turning outward in search of substitutes. Some became fascinated by the teachings of John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, some tried to move further along the path sketched by Sun Yat-sen's "Three People's Principles"; the majority, however, turned to Marxism.

## The May Fourth Movement

On May 4, 1919, there began what Mao Tse-tung has called "the greatest and most thorough cultural revolution in Chinese history." The immediate cause of the incident was the decision of the peacemakers at Versailles to leave in Japanese hands territory which rightfully belonged to China. Taking advantage of German involvement in World War I, Japan, on August 15, 1914, sent an ultimatum to Germany demanding that Japan be given territories in Shantung Province in northeastern China which Germany had leased from the Manchus in 1898 for ninety-nine years after having seized the area by force. When the war ended on November 11, 1918, the Chinese, jubilant and hopeful, assumed that the Western Powers would realize that China had been wronged and return those parts of China under Japanese control. But Chinese hopes were suddenly and dramatically smashed when it was learned that Great Britain, France, and Italy had signed a secret treaty with Japan promising that after the war they would "support Japan's claims in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung." A spirit of indignation and protest spread among students, intellectuals, organizations of merchants, industrial and craft workers, in fact permeated every level of Chinese society. Historian Chow Tse-tung reports on the first critical hours and days of the student demonstrations which led the Chinese to a new stage in their revolution.

. . . On the morning of May 4, a Sunday, at ten o'clock student representatives met at the Peking College of Law and Political Science, as scheduled by the meeting on the previous evening, to prepare the demonstration. Student representatives from thirteen colleges and universities, including the National University of Peking, attended. An Army Cadets Academy (*Lu-chün hsüeh-hsiao*) also sent

†Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).



student representatives as observers. At this meeting which lasted about an hour and a half, five resolutions were adopted: (1) that telegrams be sent to all organizations concerned at home and abroad urging them to protest the Shantung resolution of the Paris Peace Conference; (2) that efforts be made to awaken the masses of the people all over the country; (3) that a mass meeting of the Peking people be arranged; (4) that a permanent and united organization of all Peking students be established to take charge of student activities and of relations with other organizations; and (5) that the route of the demonstration that afternoon was to be from the T'ien-an Gate, through the Legation Quarter (*Tung chiao-min hang*), and thence to the Hatamen (*Ch'ung-wen-men*) Boulevard business area. At this meeting the student representatives displayed considerable efficiency and harmony in making these important decisions.

By 1:30 in the afternoon over three thousand students had gathered at the T'ien-an Gate (Square of Heavenly Peace) to take part in the demonstration. They represented thirteen colleges and universities in Peking. . . .

The Peking government had made efforts to prevent the mass meeting. A representative of the Ministry of Education accompanied by several garrison and police officers was sent to Peking University on May 4 about 11:00 a.m. and in the presence of Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei advised the students not to join in, but, after a long argument with the representative, they refused to follow his advice. The only effect of this episode was to delay the students of the university for a time. . . .

At the mass meeting and the following

demonstration, a printed brief "Manifesto of All the Students of Peking" was distributed describing this purpose:

Japan's demand for the possession of Tsingtao and other rights in Shantung is now going to be acceded to in the Paris Peace Conference. Her diplomacy has secured a great victory; and ours has led to a great failure. The loss of Shantung means the destruction of the integrity of China's territory. Once the integrity of her territory is destroyed, China will soon be annihilated. Accordingly, we students today are making a demonstration march to the Allied legations, asking the Allies to support justice. We earnestly hope that all agricultural, industrial, commercial, and other groups of the whole nation will rise and hold citizens' meetings to strive to secure our sovereignty in foreign affairs and to get rid of the traitors at home. This is the last chance for China in her life and death struggle. Today we swear two solemn oaths with all our fellow countrymen: (1) China's territory may be conquered, but it cannot be given away; (2) the Chinese people may be massacred, but they will not surrender.

Our country is about to be annihilated. Up brethren!

This manifesto was written in vivid and clean-cut vernacular Chinese, which reflected the effect of the literary revolution, and was considered an excellent expression of the spirit of the young intellectuals. Besides this, a more formal declaration written in the literary language was adopted at the meeting. It advocated "citizens' meetings," "public speeches," and pistols and bombs for the traitors as last expressions of student reaction. The declaration, which seemed to have been drafted by the militant, nationalistic students before the meeting, was not printed and distributed at the meeting and the demonstration, but it circulated

throughout the country afterwards. . . .

Besides distributing leaflets to the spectators on the streets, the students carried white flags made of cloth or paper, bearing slogans written in Chinese, English, and French and caricatures expressing the purposes and sentiments of their demonstration. . . .

Return our Tsingtao.<sup>1</sup>

We may be beheaded, but Tsingtao must not be lost.

Reclaim Tsingtao unto death.

Abolish the Twenty-one Demands.

China has been sentenced to death (by the Paris Conference).

Refuse to sign the Peace Treaty.

Boycott Japanese goods.

Protect our country's soil.

Protect our sovereignty.

China belongs to the Chinese.

Self-determination.

International Justice.

Oppose power politics. . . .

The people of Peking were deeply impressed by the demonstrators. Many spectators were so touched that they wept as they stood silently on the streets and carefully listened to the students shout their slogans. Many Western spectators greeted them with ovations and by taking off or waving their hats. The students paraded along the streets in order. Boy Scouts and students from elementary schools joined in and distributed leaflets. Even the police and secret agents, who were sent by the government to patrol, did not find any signs of intended violence on the part of the students.

But the temper of the students changed and became less disciplined during the latter part of the demonstration. Passing the Chung-hua Gate, the procession turned to the east and reached the western

entrance of the Legation Quarter. The students were refused entrance to the extraterritorial district by the Legation Quarter police. After several telephone conversations with legation officials, four student representatives, including Lo Chia-lun and possibly Chang Kuo-t'ao, were appointed to enter the American Legation to see the minister. When they found him absent, the students left for the minister a memorandum. . . .

The student representatives also found the British, French, and Italian ministers absent, and left letters at their legations. After a long wait (about two hours) they failed to secure the permission of the Legation Quarter police to pass through the quarter. At the same time, Chinese police and troops, surrounding the entrance of the quarter, violently intervened and tried to force the students back. Under this double disappointment and pressure, the students, now joined by other citizens, became irritated and angry. Suddenly, they cried, "On to the Foreign Ministry!" "On to the house of the traitor!" At this critical moment, Fu Ssu-nien, as the elected "marshal" of the student demonstration, urged his fellow students not to go; but he could not control the situation in the uproar and agitation. . . .

Up to this time, things had not yet really gotten out of control. As a British correspondent reported, the students "arrived at Ts'ao Ju-lin's house in an orderly procession, quite worthy of the students of an enlightened nation. But the wrath of the demonstrators was roused by the repressive measures taken by the Police, whereupon they broke out into acts of unbridled violence."

1. City taken over by the Japanese in 1915.



The students found the doors of the house all firmly closed and the mansion guarded by police and gendarmes. The crowd demanded that Ts'ao appear in person and explain why he had made the secret agreements with Japan. To this demand the police and gendarmes turned a deaf ear, and tried to force the students back. At this the demonstrators flew into a rage, yelling loudly, "The traitors! The traitors!" Many of them threw stones and white flags into the windows and over the walls and tried to enter but in vain. When they were about to withdraw and go back to their schools, five intransigents among them climbed up the wall, broke open a window, and jumped into the house. These five students encountered more than a dozen of Ts'ao's armed bodyguards, who, startled by the students, without resistance let them open the front door. Thus the mass of students stormed into the house. . . .

During these disorders there were some struggles between the police and the students in the courtyard. The attitude of the police, however, was very moderate under the circumstances. But they were forced to interfere after several urgent orders were received from the higher commanders. Consequently, in the fight some students and police were wounded. . . .

The students arrested, although only a few of them were among the leaders or had participated in the violence, went to the police station with a show of heroism. . . .

After the arrests, martial law was at once proclaimed for the area surrounding the Legation Quarter. Firemen rushed to Ts'ao's house. They came with a fine display of banners and much blowing of

horns. A half-inch stream was turned on the buildings which were already burning like tinder. They put out the fire at about eight o'clock. The water flooded adjacent streets carrying with it the gossip that the college boys had burnt the traitor's house. The news immediately spread all over the capital.

The event at once made a profound impression on Chinese political and social circles. The subject of most comment was the fact that in the very brief skirmish before Ts'ao's gates there had been no fierce fighting between the police and the students. "It seems very bitter irony to the local Chinese audience," one of the first reports said, "that the man who has found the money and the arms for all the Northern armies, who through his associates could command several thousand men, should be mobbed in his own house and have no one fire a shot or strike a blow for him."

From the foregoing description, it seems clear that, thus far, the demonstration had been purely a public expression of indignation by the students which had resulted in an uncontrolled disturbance unanticipated by the majority of the demonstrators. Their prime motive had been devoted patriotism. The significance of the demonstration would have been limited if there had been no developments following the events of May 4. It might have been counted merely a defiant gesture on the part of the students against the warlords and a protest against the unpopular resolutions on the Shantung question by the Great Powers at Paris. Or it might have been considered merely a riot by a youthful mob, or at least by its radical wing, as it has in fact been

interpreted by a few observers who did not understand the history and development of the movement.

But the students in Peking started immediately after the incident to organize the new intellectuals of the nation in the support of their cause. They also tried to win over the sympathy of the general public by means of publicity, mass meetings, and demonstrations. In this process they began to establish closer contacts with the masses of illiterate people, and to secure strong and effective support from the new merchants, industrialists, and urban workers. Hence the students' new ideas were spread to an unexpected extent throughout the cities of the country, the antiquated civilization began to crack up, and new sociopolitical developments were set afoot. The unique place occupied by the May Fourth Incident in the history of modern China is due to these consequences rather than to the demonstration alone.



## The Birth of Chinese Communism



## Genesis of a Communist II

The secret agreement between the Western Powers and Japan had awakened the Chinese to a realization of their own peril and vulnerability. Responding to the reaction of outraged patriotism at home, the Chinese delegation at Versailles refused to sign the treaty. Mao Tse-tung was swept up in the events of the May Fourth Movement, as were countless other students who were proud of having asserted themselves against imperialism with dignity and uncompromising determination. Significantly, the leadership of the movement was not the traditional ruling class of officials and gentry, nor did leadership spring from the ranks of the new politicians or militarists, but instead developed from the growing class of students and intellectuals. In addition to giving the Chinese their first victory in recovering sovereign rights from a Western power, the Movement stimulated among the growing number of politically committed students and intellectuals increased interest in exploring new paths toward solving China's problems. The effect of the Movement is reflected in Mao's reactions and subsequent events in his life.

"When I returned to Changsha I took a more direct rôle in politics. After the May Fourth Movement I had devoted most of my time to student political activities, and I was editor of *Hsiang Chiang Review*, the Hunan students' paper, which had a great influence on the student movement in South China. In Changsha I helped found the Wen-hua Shu Hui (Cultural Book Society), an association for study of mod-

ern cultural and political tendencies. This society, and more especially the Hsin Min Hsüeh Hui, were violently opposed to Chang Ching-yao, then *tuchun* of Hunan, and a vicious character. We led a general student strike against Chang, demanding his removal, and sent delegations to Peiping and the South-west, where Sun Yat-sen was then active, to agitate against him. In retaliation to the students' opposition,

†Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968).



Chang Ching-yao suppressed the *Hsiang Chiang Review*.

"My interest in politics continued to increase, and my mind turned more and more radical. I have told you of the background for this. But just now I was still confused, looking for a road, as we say. I read some pamphlets on anarchy, and was much influenced by them. With a student named Chu Hsun-pei, who used to visit me, I often discussed anarchism and its possibilities in China. At that time I favoured many of its proposals.

"In the winter of 1920, I organized workers politically, for the first time, and began to be guided in this by the influence of Marxist theory and the history of the Russian Revolution. During my second visit to Peking I had read much about the events in Russia, and had eagerly sought out what little Communist literature was then available in Chinese. Three books especially deeply carved my mind, and built up in me a faith in Marxism, from which, once I had accepted it as the correct interpretation of history, I did not afterwards waver. These books were *The Communist Manifesto*, translated by Chen Wang-tao, and the first Marxist book ever published in Chinese; *Class Struggle*, by Kautsky; and a *History of Socialism*, by Kirk-upp. By the summer of 1920 I had become, in theory and to some extent in action, a Marxist, and from this time on I considered myself a Marxist.

"In May of 1921, I went to Shanghai to attend the foundation meeting of the Communist Party. In its organization the leading rôles were played by Ch'ên Tu-hsiu and Li Ta-chao, both of whom were among the most brilliant intellectual leaders of China. Under Li Ta-chao, as as-

sistant librarian at Peking National University, I had rapidly developed towards Marxism, and Ch'ên Tu-hsiu had been instrumental in my interests in that direction too. I had discussed with Ch'ên, on my second visit to Shanghai, the Marxist books that I had read, and Ch'ên's own assertions of belief had deeply impressed me at what was probably a critical period in my life."

*Mao Tse-tung led the long struggle that culminated in 1949 with the establishment of Communism.*



## First Manifesto of the CCP

Word of the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 initially evoked little response in China, but as we have learned from Mao Tse-tung, there was an abundance of socialist and Marxist literature available to students and intellectuals. Marxist study groups appeared in China as early as 1918, but the first formal meeting of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), attended by nine men including Mao, was held in Shanghai in 1921. As Mao told Edgar Snow, it was at these early sessions, when they argued among themselves as to what the principles and goals of the new group should be, that he formulated his Marxist strategies. It was here too that he talked with Ch'ên Tu-shiu, dean of the College of Letters at Peking University, who was later to become the party's secretary-general. This first meeting apparently produced no formal declarations, but the meeting of June-July, 1922 resulted in the following manifesto which is the first document of China's Communist movement.

. . . The revolution of 1911 had two historical tasks: first, the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and, second, the liberation of China from foreign oppression and the transformation of China into an independent state. In this second objective the 1911 revolution aimed to create, within a framework of racial and national independence, favourable conditions for the industrial development of China. The 1911 revolution expressed the transition from the political system of feudalism to a

democratic régime, from manual labour and an artisan economy to capitalist production.

The revolution in China—under the definite conditions of its historical environment—did not consummate a victory. The democratic party [presumably, the Kuomintang], which expressed the demands of liberal social strata, resorted to a compromise with the counter-revolutionary class of feudal lords. . . .

The result of the revolution's defeat

<sup>†</sup>Conrad Brandt, Benjamin Schwartz, and John K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).



has been a strengthening of the world imperialist yoke in China and of the reactionary régime of her own militarists. The so-called republican rule is in the hands of militarists who, under conditions of a semi-feudal economy, use it to join their own actions with those of the world imperialists, who are concluding an agreement with the Chinese military clique regarding loans for their military needs and for the state's self-preservation. The foreign states are making use of the opportunity to invest their capital in China, thus acquiring, by means of a system of financial enslavement, "spheres of influence" in China and special rights and privileges. . . .

The socio-economic conditions in China affect the middle, intermediary classes with particular force. The owners of small enterprises are being deprived of property; artisans fill the ranks of the army of the unemployed; peasants sell their land to landlords for absurd sums of money because they are unable to conduct their own economy, owing to the continuously rising cost of living.

These conditions will remain unchanged so long as power remains in the hands of the feudal-lord government, in the hands of militarists; so long as power is not seized from their hands; and so long as a democratic government is not established.

Democratic government means a democratic party government. We have in mind the creation of power on the basis of a total reorganization of the entire political system of administration. Basically, this demand entails the overthrow of the authority of the reactionary, counter-revolutionary elements and groups by revolutionary methods, by a democratic party, or by a bloc of democratic groupings which will organize

power to conform to the historical requirements of their own country and with consideration for the realities of the new international environment. . . .

The military is the cause of civil war in China. So long as the military exists and rules, the creation of a so-called "good government" will be out of the question. In the present circumstances no government in China can be stable and firm, and the life and property of Chinese citizens are subject to destruction every time the militarists clash. . . .

Workers, peasants, students, soldiers, policemen, and merchants! So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, there will be no hope of disarming the provincial armies and abolishing the *tu-chün* system. So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, there will be no hope of reducing the demands for national funds, which are used to cover war expenses and further to disrupt the entire national and local financial system. So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, all conditions will be present to allow the military to secure new loans from foreigners and thus bring about an intensification of foreign influence in China. So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, there will be no hope that the military will cease imposing heavy imposts on the citizens of China; there will be no hope that looting may cease, no hope that order may be restored in all regions of China. So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, there will be no hope of a broad development of education in China and of industrial progress in our country. So long as the authority of the military is not overthrown, there will be no hope that the

struggle among militarists for the expansion of their own spheres of influence may cease. Peasants and merchants are always war victims. These wars will be inevitable and endless if they are not stopped by the people themselves.

For all of us, the only way by which we can liberate ourselves from the hard yoke of the military is to join the democratic struggle against the relics of the past—a struggle for freedom and peace. The government opposition game, played by the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the politicians, cannot be trusted. We all want peace, but real peace rather than false peace. We welcome a war to achieve the triumph of democracy, to overthrow the military and the militarists and to liberate the Chinese people.

The CCP, as the vanguard of the proletariat, struggles for working-class liberation and for the proletarian revolution. Until such time as the Chinese proletariat is able to seize power in its own hands, considering the present political and economic conditions of China's development and all the historical processes now going on in China, the proletariat's urgent task is to act jointly with the democratic party to establish a united front of democratic revolution to struggle for the overthrow of the military and for the organization of a real democratic government. . . .

Our most immediate aims are as follows:

(1) Revision of the system of tariffs forcibly imposed on China by world capitalism; abolition of consular jurisdiction and of the entire system of privileges for foreigners; the estimation of railway subsidies made to China by foreign capital and the immediate transfer of all railways to the hands of the state.

(2) Abolition of the régime of the military and of the mercenary bureaucrats; confiscation of the property of the militarists and distribution of their large landholdings among the poorest peasants.

(3) General suffrage.

(4) Freedom of assembly, speech, and press; annulment of laws for the safeguarding of "public order" by police; freedom to strike.

(5) Restricted taxation on land.

(6) Compulsory education.

(7) Prohibition of child and woman labour; laws pertaining to sanitary conditions in factories and shops; laws on workers' insurance.

(8) Abolition of all tariff surtaxes and of the *likin* system [provincial transit taxes on domestic trade].

(9) Revision of the entire Law Code with immediate abolition of the death penalty and physical torture.

Equality of the rights of men and women.

Introduction of a progressive income tax.

Under the rule of feudal militarists, none of this minimum programme can be carried out by the methods of compromise, petition, or requests. The CP takes the initiative in calling a conference, to be participated in by the revolutionary elements of the KMT<sup>1</sup> and revolutionary socialists, to discuss the question of creating a united front for struggle against warlords of the feudal type and against all relics of feudalism. This struggle along a broad united front is a war to liberate the Chinese people from a dual yoke—the yoke of foreigners and the yoke of powerful militarists in our country—a war which is just as urgently needed as it is inevitable. . . .

1. KMT stands for Kuomintang.



## The Peasant Movement in Hunan

Threatened by ambitious warlords who wanted to quash the young republic, Sun Yat-sen appealed to the United States and Great Britain for material assistance and recognition of his government. Both rejected his appeal. The Russians, however, vigorously attacked the intentions of the imperialist Western Powers, disclaimed any interest on their part in obtaining spheres of influence in China, and extended to the Chinese an offer to assistance in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1924. Sun Yat-sen was not a Communist, but the Russian Revolution had proven the ability of Communist organizers and, now, Russia was the only power willing to make any meaningful commitment to the Chinese Revolution. Thus, following meetings between Sun Yat-sen and Soviet diplomats Adolph Joffe and Michael Borodin, it was agreed that the young Communist party and Sun's Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) would come together and form a united front. The Chinese Communist Party was in fact only a left wing appendage of the Kuomintang, but in concentrating its attention on the long ignored peasant, its popularity in rural China grew rapidly. In 1921 the first peasant association was founded; by 1924, some 75,000 peasants had been organized into associations, and by 1926, the figure had risen to 665,000. Mao Tse-tung was instrumental in organizing peasant associations in his native Hunan Province; in this reading he describes the condition of the peasantry.

### March 1927

The development of the peasant movement in Hunan may be divided roughly into two periods with respect to the counties

in the province's central and southern parts where the movement has already made much headway. The first, from January to September of last year, was one

† Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. I (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

of organization. The second period, from last October to January of this year, was one of revolutionary action. The membership of the associations jumped to two million and the masses directly under their leadership increased to ten million.

The main targets of attack by the peasants are the local tyrants, the evil gentry and the lawless landlords, but in passing they also hit out against patriarchal ideas and institutions, against the corrupt officials in the cities and against bad practices and customs in the rural areas.

In a few months the peasants have accomplished what Dr. Sun Yat-sen wanted, but failed, to accomplish in the forty years he devoted to the national revolution. Countless thousands of the enslaved—the peasants—are striking down the enemies who battered on their flesh. What the peasants are doing is absolutely right; what they are doing is fine! “It’s fine!” is the theory of the peasants and of all other revolutionaries. Every revolutionary comrade should know that the national revolution requires a great change in the countryside. The Revolution of 1911 did not bring about this change, hence its failure. This change is now taking place, and it is an important factor for the completion of the revolution. Every revolutionary comrade must support it, or he will be taking the stand of counter-revolution.

A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep-rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for thousands of years. The

rural areas need a mighty revolutionary upsurge, for it alone can rouse the people in their millions to become a powerful force. Proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted. Those who talk about the peasants “going too far” seem at first sight to be different from those who say “It’s terrible!”; but in essence they proceed from the same standpoint and likewise voice a landlord theory that upholds the interests of the privileged classes. Since this theory impedes the rise of the peasant movement and so disrupts the revolution, we must firmly oppose it.

According to the survey of Changsha County, the poor peasants comprise 70 per cent, the middle peasants 20 per cent, and the landlords and the rich peasants 10 per cent of the population in the rural areas. The 70 per cent, the poor peasants, may be sub-divided into two categories, the utterly destitute and the less destitute. The utterly destitute, comprising 20 per cent, are the completely dispossessed, that is, people who have neither land nor money, are without any means of livelihood, and are forced to leave home and become mercenaries or hired labourers or wandering beggars. The less destitute, the other 50 per cent, are the partially dispossessed, that is, people with just a little land or a little money who eat up more than they earn and live in toil and distress the year round, such as the handicraftsmen, the tenant-peasants (not including the rich tenant-peasants) and the semi-owner-peasants. This great mass of poor peasants, or altogether 70 per cent of the rural population, are the backbone of the peasant associations, the vanguard in the overthrow of the feudal forces



and the heroes who have performed the great revolutionary task which for long years was left undone. Without the poor peasant class (the "riffraff," as the gentry call them), it would have been impossible to bring about the present revolutionary situation in the countryside, or to overthrow the local tyrants and evil gentry and complete the democratic revolution. The poor peasants, being the most revolutionary group, have gained the leadership of the peasant associations. Leadership by the poor peasants is absolutely necessary. Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution. To deny their role is to deny the revolution. To attack them is to attack the revolution. They have never been wrong on the general direction of the revolution. They have beaten down the local tyrants and evil gentry, big and small, and kept them underfoot.

Most critics of the peasant associations allege that they have done a great many bad things. The peasants' attack on the local tyrants and evil gentry is entirely revolutionary behaviour and in no way blameworthy. The peasants have done a great many things, and in order to answer people's criticism we must closely examine all their activities, one by one, to see what they have actually done. I have classified and summed up their activities of the last few months; in all, the peasants under the leadership of the peasant associations have the following great achievements to their credit.

#### 1. ORGANIZING THE PEASANTS INTO PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS

This is the first great achievement of the peasants. In counties like Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang and Hengshan, nearly all

the peasants are organized and there is hardly a remote corner where they are not on the move. By the end of January the membership must have reached at least two million. As a family generally enters only one name when joining and has an average of five members, the mass following must be about ten million. This astonishing and accelerating rate of expansion explains why the local tyrants, evil gentry and corrupt officials have been isolated, why the public has been amazed at how completely the world has changed since the peasant movement, and why a great revolution has been wrought in the countryside. This is the first great achievement of the peasants under the leadership of their associations.

#### 2. HITTING THE LANDLORDS POLITICALLY

Once the peasants have their organization, the first thing they do is to smash the political prestige and power of the landlord class, and especially of the local tyrants and evil gentry, that is, to pull down landlord authority and build up peasant authority in rural society. This is a most serious and vital struggle. It is the pivotal struggle in the second period, the period of revolutionary action. Without victory in this struggle, no victory is possible in the economic struggle to reduce rent and interest, to secure land and other means of production, and so on.

#### 3. HITTING THE LANDLORDS ECONOMICALLY

*Prohibition on sending grain out of the area, forcing up grain prices, and hoarding and cornering.* This is one of the great events of recent months in the economic struggle of the Hunan peasants. Since last October the poor peasants have prevented the outflow of the grain of the

landlords and rich peasants and have banned the forcing up of grain prices and hoarding and cornering. As a result, the poor peasants have fully achieved their objective; the ban on the outflow of grain is watertight, grain prices have fallen considerably, and hoarding and cornering have disappeared.

*Prohibition on increasing rents and deposits; agitation for reduced rents and deposits.* Last July and August, when the peasant associations were still weak, the landlords, following their long-established practice of maximum exploitation, served notice one after another on their tenants that rents and deposits would be increased. But by October, when the peasant associations had grown considerably in strength and had all come out against the raising of rents and deposits, the landlords dared not breathe another word on the subject. From November onwards, as the peasants have gained ascendancy over the landlords they have taken the further step of agitating for reduced rents and deposits.

*Prohibition on cancelling tenancies.* In July and August of last year there were still many instances of landlords cancelling tenancies and re-letting the land. But after October nobody dared cancel a tenancy. Today, the cancelling of tenancies and the re-letting of land are quite out of the question.

#### 4. OVERTHROWING THE FEUDAL RULE OF THE LOCAL TYRANTS AND EVIL GENTRY — SMASHING THE *Tu* AND *Tuan*

The evil gentry who ran these organs were virtual monarchs of the countryside. Comparatively speaking, the peasants were not so much concerned with the president of the Republic, the pro-

vincial military governor or the county magistrate; their real “bosses” were these rural monarchs. A mere snort from these people, and the peasants knew they had to watch their step. As a consequence of the present revolt in the countryside the authority of the landlord class has generally been struck down.

#### 5. OVERTHROWING THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE COUNTY MAGISTRATE AND HIS BAILIFFS

In a county where power is in the hands of the local tyrants and evil gentry, the magistrate, whoever he may be, is almost invariably a corrupt official. In a county where the peasants have risen there is clean government, whoever the magistrate.

#### 6. OVERTHROWING THE CLAN AUTHORITY OF THE ANCESTRAL TEMPLES AND CLAN ELDERS, THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OF TOWN AND VILLAGE GODS, AND THE MASCULINE AUTHORITY OF HUSBANDS

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) the state system (political authority), ranging from the national, provincial and county government down to that of the township; (2) the clan system (clan authority), ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (3) the supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband).

These four authorities political, clan, religious and masculine are the embodiment of the whole feudal patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants.

While I was in the countryside, I did some propaganda against superstition among the peasants. I said:

"The gods? Worship them by all means. But if you had only Lord Kuan and the Goddess of Mercy and no peasant association, could you have overthrown the local tyrants and evil gentry? The gods and goddesses are indeed miserable objects. You have worshipped them for centuries, and they have not overthrown a single one of the local tyrants or evil gentry for you! Now you want to have your rent reduced. Let me ask, how will you go about it? Will you believe in the gods or in the peasant association?"

My words made the peasants roar with laughter.

#### 7. SPREADING POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

The spread of political propaganda throughout the rural areas is entirely an achievement of the Communist Party and the peasant associations. Simple slogans, cartoons and speeches have produced such a widespread and speedy effect among the peasants that every one of them seems to have been through a political school.

#### 8. PEASANT BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

When the peasant associations, under Communist Party leadership, establish their authority in the countryside, the peasants begin to prohibit or restrict the things they dislike. Gaming, gambling and opium-smoking are the three things that are most strictly forbidden.

*Gaming.* Where the peasant association is powerful, mahjong, dominoes and card games are completely banned.

The peasant association in the 14th District of Hsianghsiang burned two basketfuls of mahjong sets.

If you go to the countryside, you will find none of these games played; anyone who violates the ban is promptly and strictly punished.

*Gambling.* Former hardened gamblers are now themselves suppressing gambling; this abuse, too, has been swept away in places where the peasant association is powerful.

*Opium-smoking.* The prohibition is extremely strict. When the peasant association orders the surrender of opium pipes, no one dares to raise the least objection. In Liling County one of the evil gentry who did not surrender his pipes was arrested and paraded through the villages.

#### 9. ELIMINATING BANDITRY

Wherever the peasant associations are powerful, there is not a trace of banditry. Surprisingly enough, in many places even the pilfering of vegetables has disappeared. In other places there are still some pilferers. But in the counties I visited, even including those that were formerly bandit-ridden, there was no trace of bandits.

#### 10. THE MOVEMENT FOR EDUCATION

In China education has always been the exclusive preserve of the landlords, and the peasants have had no access to it. But the landlords' culture is created by the peasants, for its sole source is the peasants' sweat and blood. In China 90 per cent of the people have had no edu-



cation, and of these the overwhelming majority are peasants. The moment the power of the landlords was overthrown in the rural areas, the peasants' movement for education began. See how the peasants who hitherto detested the schools are today zealously setting up evening classes!

Now the peasants are enthusiastically establishing evening classes, which they call peasant schools. Some have already been opened, others are being organized, and on the average there is one school per township. The peasants are very enthusiastic about these schools, and regard them, and only them, as their own. The funds for the evening schools come from the "public revenue from superstition," from ancestral temple funds, and from other idle public funds or property.

#### 11. THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The peasants really need co-operatives, and especially consumers', marketing and credit co-operatives. When they buy goods, the merchants exploit them; when they sell their farm produce, the merchants cheat them; when they borrow money or rice, they are fleeced by the usurers; and they are eager to find a solution to these three problems.

All the deeds enumerated above have been accomplished by the peasants under the leadership of the peasant associations. Would the reader please think it over and say whether any of them is bad in its fundamental spirit and revolutionary significance? Only the local tyrants and evil gentry, I think, will call them bad.

## The Kuomintang – CCP Schism



## The Shanghai Coup of April 12, 1927

The united front formed between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party lasted a short time, from 1924 to 1927. Following the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek assumed a position of unchallenged authority and began an autocratic rule of China. Fiercely nationalistic, Chiang was concerned about the success of the Soviet-organized Chinese Communist political organs in establishing a broad base of peasant support. He became intent on destroying the Communists, eliminating their influence in the Kuomintang, and seizing complete power for himself. Thus, stringent rules of censorship were imposed, Chinese Communists were barred from key posts in the party, and, beginning in 1927, Chiang pressed his “bandit extermination campaigns,” a systematic program designed to literally wipe out the left wing of the party. The nature and methods of the extermination campaigns are illustrated in the following collection of contemporary accounts.

At four o'clock on the morning of April 12 a bugle blast sounded from Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters at the Foreign Ministry Bureau on Route Ghisi. A Chinese gunboat at anchor off Nantao sounded a blast on its siren. “Simultaneously,” reported the *China Press*, “the machine guns broke loose in a steady roll.” The attack was launched at the fixed hour in Chapei, Nantao, the Western District, in Woosung, Pootung, and Jessfield. It came as no surprise to any except the workers, for as

the local British newspaper revealed: “All the authorities concerned, Chinese and foreign, after midnight were made secretly cognizant of the events which were to take place in the morning.”

Members of Shanghai's underworld gangs “had feverishly worked through the night organizing secret parties to appear at dawn as though from nowhere.” They wore white armbands bearing the Chinese character *kung* (labor). The *North China Daily News* called them “armed Kuomin-

† Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961).



tang laborers." The Shanghai Municipal Police Report referred to "merchants' volunteers." The *China Press* contended itself with "Nationalist troops." Together or separately, according to detailed, pre-arranged plans, they attacked the headquarters of working-class organizations scattered throughout the city. In most cases, as at the Foochow Guild in Nantao and the police station in Pootung, the objectives were won after sharp but brief battles. Their quarters once occupied, the pickets and their supporters were given short, brutal shrift. Their arms were seized and "even their clothes and shoes ripped from them." Every man who resisted was shot down where he stood. The remainder were lashed together and marched out to be executed either in the streets or at Lunghua.

"What action the soldiers took beyond disarming the Communists is naturally not known. It is not going to be advertised by the Chinese authorities," complacently reported the *North China Daily News*. Early foreign reports minimized the casualties of that first day, but the British-controlled Shanghai Municipal Police later came nearer the actual toll when it reported that nearly four hundred workers were killed in the day's operations. Other reports put the death toll at close to seven hundred. Among the missing was Wang Shao-hua, chairman of the General Labor Union. It was not discovered until some time later that he had been kidnaped by gangsters the previous afternoon and carried off to military headquarters at Lunghua, where he was executed. At four o'clock, the military authorities announced they had the situation "in hand."

At noon on April 13 a great crowd of

workers gathered in a mass meeting on Chinyuen Road in Chapei. Resolutions were passed demanding the return of the seized arms, punishment of the union-wreckers, and protection for the General Labor Union. A petition was drafted and a parade formed to march to Second Division headquarters to present it to General Chou Feng-ch'i. Women and children were in the parade. None of the men had arms. They swung into Paoshan Road under a pouring rain. As they came abreast of San Te Terrace, a short distance from the military headquarters, machine gunners waiting for them there opened fire without warning. Lead spouted into the thick crowd from both sides of the street. Men, women, and children dropped screaming into the mud. The crowd broke up into mad flight. The soldiers kept firing into the backs of the fleeing demonstrators. From adjacent alleyways the attackers fell upon the crowd, swinging bayonets, rifle butts, and broad swords. They pursued the fleeing marchers right into the houses in Yi Ping Terrace, Pootung and Tientungan Roads—streets thickly clustered with working-class tenements. Men and women were dragged out. "Those who resisted were either killed on the spot or wounded. . . . Many of the wounded were left to die where they dropped. It was an hour before the street was cleared," reported one eyewitness. Another a little later saw bodies being carted off in vans. He counted eight truckloads filled with corpses. More than three hundred were killed and a much larger number wounded. Many of the wounded were "carried away and buried with the dead."

This reign of terror, directed above all

at the workers and the Communists, likewise for a time crossed the bounds of property which it was instituted to keep inviolate. The Chinese bankers and merchants had found it necessary to call in Chiang Kai-shek and the gangsters against the workers. Now they were forced to submit themselves to the predatory raids of their own rescuers.

"The plight of the Chinese merchant in and about Shanghai is pitiable," reported the correspondent of *The New York Times* on May 4. "At the mercy of General Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship, the merchants do not know what the next day will bring, confiscations, compulsory loans, exile, or possible execution. . . . The military authorities have ordered the reorganization of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and other institutions with new directors, presumably satisfactory to Chiang Kai-shek and Pai Ch'ung-hsi, as they ordered the reorganization of the labor unions. . . . Outlawry against the better class of Chinese is rampant." When the raising of the \$30 million loan for the new Nanking government lagged, the merchants received "military advice to subscribe, with intimations that arrests may follow failure to do so. . . ." Even Yung Chung-chin, well-known leading industrialist, was not exempt. Chiang asked him for a half million dollars. When Yung tried to bargain, Chiang had him arrested forthwith. Yung reportedly bought himself out of prison with \$250,000. Others had to pay more.

## The Long March

The extermination campaigns came very close to being successful, and the years 1927 to 1936 stand as one of the most trying and crucial periods of the Chinese Communist movement. Referred to by Communist historians as the Second Revolutionary Civil War, these years witnessed a bloodbath in which tens of thousands of workers, leaders, and party rank and file, including Mao's first wife and his younger sister, fell victim to Kuomintang repression. The "mass base" of the Chinese Communist movement, despite Kuomintang measures, included nine million people by 1934, organized into workers' and peasants' unions under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and the Red Army and formed around a central government located in Kiangsi Province in southern China. Faced with the decimation of their ranks, Communist leaders were forced to carry out a bold plan to prevent the final encirclement and destruction of the party. In this reading Edgar Snow, who visited with Mao again in 1960, records Mao's recollections of the period.

"Gradually the Red Army's work with the masses improved," Mao recounted, "discipline strengthened, and a new technique of organization developed." As early as the Chingkangshan period the army had "imposed three simple rules: prompt obedience to orders; no confiscations whatever from the poor peasantry; prompt delivery to the government, for disposal, of all goods confiscated from the landlords." Eight other rules were

adopted and put to music, to be sung and remembered by all troops:

1. Replace doors when you leave a house.
2. Return and roll up the straw matting.
3. Be courteous and polite to the people and help them.
4. Return all borrowed articles.
5. Replace all damaged articles.
6. Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.
7. Pay for all articles purchased.
8. Be sanitary.

†Edgar Snow, *The Other Side of the River* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962).



"Three other duties were taught to the Red Army as its primary purpose: first, to struggle to the death against the enemy; second, to arm the masses; third, to raise money to support the struggle. . . . Red tactics, apart from the political basis of the movement, explained much of the successful military development." All the elementary rules of consideration were innovations for Chinese soldiers—traditionally contemptuous of the people and regarded by them as a kind of unavoidable scourge and punishment. (Good iron doesn't become a nail, said an ancient Chinese proverb, nor does a good man become a soldier.)

"Four simple tactical slogans were early adopted:

When the enemy advances, we retreat.  
When the enemy halts and encamps, we trouble him.

When the enemy seeks to avoid battle, we attack.

When the enemy retreats, we pursue.

Whenever the Red Army departed from them, in general, it did not succeed."

"Our forces were small," Mao explained, "exceeded from ten to twenty times by the enemy; our resources and fighting materials were limited, and only by skillfully combining the tactics of maneuvering and guerrilla warfare could we hope to succeed"—in capturing arms and ammunition from the Kuomintang forces, the Reds' "only supply base." "The most important single tactic of the Red Army was its ability to concentrate its main forces in the attack, and swiftly divide and separate them. This implies that positional warfare was to be avoided and every effort made to meet the forces of the enemy while in movement, and destroy

them." On the basis of these tactics the Red Army perfected the mobility and power of its "short attack"—rapid engagement utilizing massive superiority in brief decisive battles of limited scope.

Beginning in 1930 Chiang Kai-shek had launched four major "extermination campaigns" against Red strongholds. The net results had been only further arming of his adversaries. Late in 1933 he mobilized 900,000 men and deployed about 300,000 well-armed troops in his most systematic effort to encircle and annihilate the Red forces. This time he was successful—almost.

As the steel encirclement narrowed and tightened, and enemy depopulation tactics shrank the "human base" itself, the Red leaders made an agonizing decision. After seven years of fighting they abandoned their hard-won soviet republic. They withdrew their main surviving forces (about 90,000 men), leaving only a few thousand Red "regulars" and partisans to fight rear-guard actions. On October 16, 1934, with what equipment and supplies they could carry on the backs of animals and 5,000 porters, the Red Army began a great strategic retreat by means of which—historic paradox—they eventually "recovered the initiative."

It was only now that Mao Tse-tung at last stood forth as the strongest personality of the party. It is one thing to command men in hope of early victory. It is quite another to lead them into such cheerless prospects as faced the defeated Red Army. Completely cut off from all further contact with Moscow, moving into country where the populace had been indoctrinated to fear and hate them, yet dependent on the people for survival, constantly pur-

sued, obliged to give battle nearly every day, to improvise, to maneuver, to double and redouble their tracks to avoid ensnarement, never sure when they would eat again or where lie down exhausted, these were warriors whose lives hung upon morale alone—and faith in their leadership. Many thousands were to desert or fall by the wayside.

The weakest link in the encirclement lay on the west, where the provincial warlords in Kweichow were unable to prevent a major Red breakthrough.

Political differences behind them (for the moment), the Reds now advanced upon the great adventure which was to unite them more firmly than any political elite in our times. Ahead lay unknown dangers, exploration, discovery, trials of human courage, ecstasy and agony, triumph and reverses—and through it all an amazing ardor and optimism, as thousands of youths, most of them still in their late teens or early twenties, marched into the western horizon on an odyssey unsurpassed in military annals.

Mao Tse-tung first spoke to me of the ordeal, now behind him, as the *Liang Wan Wu-Ch'ien-Li Ch'ang Ch'eng*—the Long March of 25,000 *li*. With all its twists and turns, advances and retreats, from the farthest starting point in Fukien to rugged eastern Tibet, and then to the end of the road near the Gobi Desert, some men probably did that distance. An accurate stage-by-stage itinerary prepared for me by the First Army Corps showed a main trek of some 6,000 miles—about twice the width of the United States. This journey on foot led across some of the world's most arduous trails, its highest mountains, and its greatest rivers.

The first critical test was the crossing of the upper Yangtze, the “Gold Sand” River. As the Reds pulled out of Kweichow they entered the wild mountainous country of western Yunnan, where the river flows treacherous and swift, through gorges thousands of feet deep. The few bridge crossings had all been occupied by government troops, and all ferryboats had been drawn to the north bank. Chiang Kai-shek was well pleased. Advancing in an enveloping movement, he sought to finish off the Red Army forever in these defiles. Far into Yunnan, the Reds started to build a bamboo bridge. Then a commando force countermarched at night through the mountains, covered eighty-five miles on foot in twenty-four hours, and stealthily seized a small Kuomintang garrison at a ferry crossing. Dressed in captured uniforms, they persuaded troops on the opposite bank to send over ferryboats. Under cover of darkness they then crossed the river, seized the fort, and secured a vital route on which the whole army soon escaped westward.

Another strategic river had to be crossed: the Tatu, in western Szechuan. Here the heroes of the *Three Kingdoms* had met defeat, and here the troops of Prince Shih Ta-k'ai, last of the T'ai-p'ing rebels, had been surrounded and completely destroyed with their leader. Mao and Chu Teh had studied both those campaigns; they knew that the main cause of their heroes' defeat had been costly delay. To beat Chiang Kai-shek to the river, they entered the never conquered and forbidding forest domains of aborigines known as the Lolos. All Lolos traditionally hated Chinese, as their oppressors, but there were White Lolos and Black Lolos. To

the Black Lolos the Reds declared that their enemies were the White Chinese; they were Red Chinese and the Lolos' friends, fighting for their freedom. Why not unite against their common enemies, the *White* Chinese? In skillful bargaining led by one commander who knew the native language, the Reds negotiated a treaty and safely passed their whole army through territory the Generalissimo [Chiang Kai-shek] thought impossible for them.

The strategy and tactics by which the dare-to-die band of heroes then seized and captured the last bridge on the Tatu is an exciting chapter in itself. Had they failed, the Red Army would have been forced into high Tibet and there likely have perished in the eternal snows. At the sacrifice of some lives they succeeded. Ahead lay a 16,000-foot pass over the Great Snowy Mountains of western Szechuan, and range after range beyond that. They climbed on. "On Pao-tung Kang peak alone," Mao Tse-tung said, "one army lost two-thirds of its transport animals. Hundreds fell down and never got up again." So did hundreds of the men and women who braved the trek.

Into wild lands inhabited by warring tribesmen who opposed them at every step, in and out of thick, gloomy forests and miasmatic jungles, across more head-water marshlands where comrades sank and disappeared, into deep, narrow passes where hostile natives often ambushed them—uninfluenced by the "Communist policy of equality for national minorities"—they struggled on. For weeks, said Mao, "to get one sheep cost the life of one comrade."

By September they were deep in the Great Grasslands, where they saw no

human habitation for ten days. Almost perpetual rain falls over these high swamp-lands, passable by a maze of narrow foot-holds known only to native highlanders, whom the Reds had to capture to guide them. More animals were lost, and more men. Many foundered in a weird sea of wet grass and disappeared, beyond reach, into the depth of swamps. There was no dry firewood. There was nothing to eat but wild vegetables and herbs. There were no trees for shelter: at night they huddled under bushes tied together. Worst of all, they could get no potable water. "On occasions men were reduced to drinking their own urine."

When at last they came down onto the Kansu plain their numbers had been cut to 7,000. Still more critical battles lay ahead before they entered the fertile Yellow River basin. After a brief rest, they broke through weak cordons of Moslem cavalry and replenished themselves. They finally united with local Red forces in north Shensi, on October 25, 1935, and wearily assessed their achievement.

Out of a total journey of 368 days they had spent 235 in marches by day and eighteen in marches by night. Official army records show that they fought an average of almost a skirmish a day, somewhere along the line, while fifteen days were devoted to major pitched battles. Aside from the long stay in the Sungpan (fifty-six days) they had taken only forty-four days of rest, over a distance of about 6,000 miles—one halt for every 114 miles of marching. The mean daily stage was about twenty-four miles.

Altogether they crossed eighteen mountain ranges, five of them perennially



snow-capped, and they crossed twenty-four rivers. They passed through twelve provinces, each larger than most European countries; they broke through enveloping armies of ten different provincial landlords: they eluded, outmaneuvered or defeated Kuomintang troops numbering more than 300,000. They entered and crossed six different aboriginal districts and penetrated areas through which no Chinese army had gone for many years.

*Ch'ang Ch'eng* means "Long March" in Chinese; in historical names *ch'ang* evokes a meaning-sense of "immortality." One may reject or despise Communist ideology as a universal religion or political faith, but it is impossible not to recognize the Long March as one of the great triumphs of men against odds and man against nature. In the past three centuries there had been no similar armed migration of a nation in Asia, with the exception of the amazing Flight of the Torgut from the Caucasus to Mongolia. Hannibal's march over the Alps looks like a pleasure excursion beside it. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow ended in the complete destruction of his Grand Army. Xenophon's march of the 10,000 is one of history's few other examples of a commander who withdrew his army from encirclement across a whole hostile territory and brought it to sanctuary with a sense of victory in defeat.

While the Red Army was unquestionably in forced retreat, its toughened veterans reached their planned objective with moral and political will as strong as—probably much stronger than—ever. They declared and believed they were advancing to lead a sacred national salvation war against the invading Japanese—a psycho-

logical factor of great importance to the rank and file. The conviction helped turn what might have been a demoralized rout into an arrival in triumph. History has subsequently shown that Mao was undoubtedly right in taking the Red forces to the strategic Northwest, a region which he correctly foresaw was to play a determining role in the immediate destinies of China, Japan, and Soviet Russia.

## The Long March

September 1935

*The Red Army fears not the trials of the  
Long March  
And thinks nothing of a thousand mountains  
and rivers.  
The Wuling Ridges spread out like ripples;  
The Wumeng Ranges roll like balls of clay.  
Warmly are the cliffs wrapped in clouds  
and washed by the Gold Sand;  
Chilly are the iron chains lying across  
the width of the Great Ferry.  
A thousand acres of snow on the Min  
Mountains delight  
My troops who have just left them behind.*

Mao Tse-tung





## The Roots of Mao's Victory





## Memoranda by Foreign Service Officers in China

As Chiang Kai-shek pursued his goal of exterminating the CCP and the survivors of the Long March took root in their isolated stronghold in Yen-an, the Japanese had begun their invasion of China. Even after Japanese intentions were made dramatically clear by their invasion and occupation of Manchuria in 1931, Chiang Kai-shek continued his strategy of “unifying” China first, using Chinese to fight Chinese. The invaders continued to penetrate deeper into northern China, and by the late 1930’s Japanese tank columns moved at will across the countryside and their aircraft controlled the skies, strafing and bombing Chinese villages and cities with brutal insensibility. In spite of this, Chiang was still reluctant to commit his troops and materiel to fight the Japanese when his goal of destroying Communism in China had still not been realized. Finally, in January, 1937, Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped at Sain, not by Communists, but by Chinese warlords who demanded that he fight the Japanese and discontinue his civil war. Chiang agreed, and once again a Kuomintang-CCP united front was established. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, brought the United States into the war and, assuming that the Americans would defeat Japan, Nationalist commanders avoided direct confrontation with the enemy in order to conserve supplies and men. Thus, in 1942, with the Japanese far from defeat, China’s population suffering unspeakable outrages at the hands of the invaders, and China’s great cities under constant siege, Chiang resumed the civil war against the Communists. The scene in China between 1943 and 1945 is described in the following reports from American Department of State Foreign Service Officers John Stewart Service and John P. Davies, Jr., assigned to China throughout the war.

<sup>†</sup> *U.S. Relations with China, with Special Reference to the Period 1944–1949* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30, August, 1949).

*October 9, 1944 (Service)*

“Reports of two American officers, several correspondents, and twenty-odd foreign travelers regarding conditions in the areas of North China under Communist control are in striking agreement. This unanimity, based on actual observation, is significant. It forces us to accept certain facts, and to draw from those facts an important conclusion.

“The Japanese are being actively opposed—in spite of the constant warfare and cruel retaliation this imposes on the population. This opposition is gaining in strength. The Japanese can temporarily crush it in a limited area by the concentration of overwhelming force. But it is impossible for them to do this simultaneously over the huge territory the Communists now influence.

“This opposition is possible and successful because it is total guerrilla warfare aggressively waged by a totally mobilized population. In this total mobilization the regular forces of the Communists, though leaders and organizers, have become subordinate to the vastly more numerous forces of the people themselves. They exist because the people permit, support and wholeheartedly fight with them. There is complete solidarity of Army and people.

“This total mobilization is based upon and has been made possible by what amounts to an economic, political and social revolution. This revolution has been moderate and democratic. It has improved the economic condition of the peasants by rent and interest reduction, tax reform and good government. It has given them democratic self-government, political consciousness and a sense of their rights. It has freed them from feudalistic bonds and

given them self-respect, self-reliance and a strong feeling of cooperative group interest. The common people, for the first time, have been given something to fight for.

“The Japanese are being fought now not merely because they are foreign invaders but because they deny this revolution. The people will continue to fight any government which limits or deprives them of these newly won gains.”

*November 7, 1944 (Davies)*

“The Chinese Communists are so strong between the Great Wall and the Yangtze that they can now look forward to the post-war control of at least North China. They may also continue to hold not only those parts of the Yangtze valley which they now dominate but also new areas in Central and South China. The Communists have fallen heir to these new areas by a process, which has been operating for years, whereby Chiang Kai-shek loses his cities and principal lines of communication to the Japanese and the countryside to the Communists.

“The Communists have survived ten years of civil war and seven years of Japanese offensives. They have survived not only more sustained enemy pressure than the Chinese Central Government forces have been subjected to, but also a severe Blockade imposed by Chiang.

“They have survived and they have grown. Communists growth since 1937 has been almost geometric in progression. From control of some 100,000 square kilometers with a population of one million and a half they have expanded to about 850,000 square kilometers with a population of approximately 90 million. And they will continue to grow.

“The reason for this phenomenal vitality

and strength is simple and fundamental. It is mass support, mass participation. The Communist government and armies are the first governments and armies in modern Chinese history to have positive and widespread popular support. They have this support because the governments and armies are genuinely of the people."

*January 4, 1945 (Davies)*

"The Current situation in China must afford the Kremlin a certain sardonic satisfaction.

"The Russians see the anti-Soviet Government of Chiang Kai-shek decaying—militarily, politically and economically. They observe the Chinese Communists consolidating in North China, expanding southward in the wake of Chiang's military debacles and now preparing for the formal establishment of a separatist administration.

"It is equally evident to the Russians that the Chinese Communists will not in the meantime be idle. The Communists have amply demonstrated a capacity for independent, dynamic growth. However Marshal Stalin may describe the Chinese Communists to his American visitors, he can scarcely be unaware of the fact that the Communists are a considerably more stalwart and self-sufficient force than any European underground or partisan movement.

"The Kuomintang and National Government are disintegrating."

*June 20, 1944 (Service)*

"The position of the Kuomintang and the Generalissimo is weaker than it has been for the past ten years.

"China faces economic collapse. This is causing disintegration of the army and the

government's administrative apparatus. It is one of the chief causes of growing political unrest. The Generalissimo is losing the support of a China which, by unity in the face of violent aggression, found a new and unexpected strength during the first two years of the war with Japan. Internal weaknesses are becoming accentuated and there is taking place a reversal of the process of unification.

"1. Morale is low and discouragement widespread. There is a general feeling of hopelessness.

"2. The authority of the Central Government is weakening in the areas away from the larger cities. Government mandates and measures of control cannot be enforced and remain ineffective. It is becoming difficult for the Government to collect enough food for its huge army and bureaucracy.

"3. The governmental and military structure is being permeated and demoralized from top to bottom by corruption, unprecedented in scale and openness.

"4. The intellectual and salaried classes, who have suffered the most heavily from inflation, are in danger of liquidation. The academic groups suffer not only the attrition and demoralization of economic stress; the weight of years of political control and repression is robbing them of the intellectual vigor and leadership they once had.

"5. Peasant resentment of the abuses of conscription, tax collection and other arbitrary impositions has been widespread and is growing. The danger is ever increasing that past sporadic outbreaks of banditry and agrarian unrest may increase in scale and find political motivation."



"The Kuomintang is not only proving itself incapable of averting a debacle by its own initiative: on the contrary, its policies are precipitating the crisis.

"Some war-weariness in China must be expected. But the policies of the Kuomintang under the impact of hyperinflation and in the presence of obvious signs of internal and external weakness must be described as bankrupt. This truth is emphasized by the failure of the Kuomintang to come to grips with the situation during the recently concluded plenary session of the Central Executive Committee.

"1. On the internal political front the desire of the Kuomintang leaders to perpetuate their own power overrides all other considerations. The result is the enthronement of reaction.

"The Kuomintang continues to ignore the great political drive within the country for democratic reform. The writings of the Generalissimo and the Party press show that they have no real understanding of that term. Constitutionalism remains an empty promise for which the only "preparation" is a half-hearted attempt to establish an unpopular and undemocratic system of local self-government based on collective responsibility and given odium by Japanese utilization in Manchuria and other areas under their control.

"Questions basic to the future of democracy such as the form of the Constitution and the composition and election of the National Congress remain the dictation of the Kuomintang. There is no progress toward the fundamental conditions of freedom of expression and recognition of non-Kuomintang groups. Even the educational and political advantages of giving power and democratic character to

the existing but impotent Peoples Political Council are ignored.

"The Kuomintang shows no intention of relaxing the authoritarian controls on which its present power depends. Far from discarding or reducing the paraphernalia of a police state—the multiple and omnipresent secret police organizations, the Gendarmerie, and so forth—it continues to strengthen them as its last resort for internal security.

"2. On the economic front the Kuomintang is unwilling to take any effective steps to check inflation which would injure the landlord-capitalist class.

"It is directly responsible for the increase of official corruption which is one of the main obstacles to any rational attempt to ameliorate the financial situation. It does nothing to stop large-scale profiteering, hoarding and speculation—all of which are carried on by people either powerful in the Party or with intimate political connections.

"It refuses to attack the fundamental economic problems of China such as the growing concentration of land holdings, extortionate rents and ruinous interest rates, and the impact of inflation."

"These apparently suicidal policies of the Kuomintang have their roots in the composition and nature of the Party.

"In view of the above it becomes pertinent to ask *why* the Kuomintang has lost its power of leadership; *why* it neither wishes actively to wage war against Japan itself nor to cooperate wholeheartedly with the American Army in China; and *why* it has ceased to be capable of unifying the country.

"The answer to all these questions is to be found in the present composition and nature of the Party. Politically, a classical

and definitive American description becomes ever more true; the Kuomintang is a collection of conservative political cliques interested primarily in the preservation of their own power against all outsiders and in jockeying for position among themselves. Economically, the Kuomintang rests on the narrow base of the rural-gentry-landlords and militarists, the higher ranks of the government bureaucracy, and merchant bankers having intimate connections with the government bureaucrats."

*After gaining power, Mao Tse-tung directed all industrial, military, agricultural, intellectual and artistic activity in China.*



## General Wedemeyer Reports on China

### DIRECTIVE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL WEDEMEYER

You will proceed to China without delay for the purpose of making an appraisal of the political, economic, psychological and military situations—current and projected. . . .

In making your appraisal it is desired that you proceed with detachment from any feeling of prior obligation to support or to further official Chinese programs which do not conform to sound American policy with regard to China. In presenting the findings of your mission you should endeavor to state as concisely as possible your estimate of the character, extent, and probable consequences of assistance which you may recommend, and the probable consequences in the event that assistance is not given.

*July 9, 1947*

Approved

*Harry S. Truman*

**TAXATION:** Approximately 80 per cent of the people of China are hard working peasants, their crops are visible and officials can easily appraise the amounts the peasants are able to give toward government. Corrupt officials in many instances take more than the peasants are able to give and this results finally in the peasants leaving the land and forming bandit groups.

In contrast to the taxation of peasants, Chinese businessmen and rich Chinese resort to devious and dishonest methods

to avoid payment of proper taxes to their government.

I believe that the Chinese Communist movement cannot be defeated by the employment of force. Today China is being invaded by an idea instead of strong military forces from the outside. The only way in my opinion to combat this idea successfully is to do so with another idea that will have stronger appeal and win the support of the people. This means that politically and economically the Central Government will have to remove corrup-

<sup>†</sup>*U.S. Relations with China, with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30, August, 1949).



tion and incompetence from its ranks in order to provide justice and equality and to protect the personal liberties of the Chinese people, particularly of the peasants.

CONSCRIPTION: I have received many reports that the conscription of men for military service is not being carried out honestly or efficiently. Again, as in taxation peasants are expected to bear the brunt of conscription, although in the cities there are thousands and thousands of able-bodied men, who should be under the conscription laws eligible for military service. Rich men's sons by the payment of money avoid conscription and the sons of rich men are being sent to school abroad instead of remaining here to help their country in a time of great crisis.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIANS: In Manchuria, I was told by many sources that the Central Government armies were welcomed enthusiastically by the people as deliverers from Japanese oppression. Today, after several months of experience with these Central Government armies, the people experience a feeling of hatred and distrust because the officers and enlisted men were arrogant and rude. Also they stole and looted freely; their general attitude was that of conquerors instead of that of deliverers. In Formosa the reports are exactly the same, alienating the Formosans from the Central Government. All of this is a matter of discipline. Of course if the officers themselves are dishonest or discourteous, one can hardly expect the enlisted men to be otherwise.

PUNISHMENT AND SECRET POLICE: I have had reported to me many instances of misdirection and abuse in meting out punishments to offenders political or otherwise. In Formosa there are many so-called political offenders who are still in prison without any charges or sentences. Some have been released but only after paying large sums of money and being required to sign a statement to the effect that they were guilty of an offense against the government. Actually in their hearts and minds they did not feel that they were guilty of such offense. Secret police operate widely, very much as they do in Russia and as they did in Germany. People disappear. Students are thrown into jail. No trials and no sentences. Actions of this nature do not win support for the government. Quite the contrary. Everyone lives with a feeling of fear and loses confidence in the government.

## Conclusions

1. Using as an example the institutions and conditions of traditional China, develop a general statement as to the causes of social revolution.
2. How were the 1911 Revolution and the May Fourth Movement different?
3. What were the important family relationships, educational experiences, and events of Mao Tse-tung's youth? In what ways was Mao representative of a revolutionary generation in China?
4. Why were the Nationalist and Communist parties unable to function as, for example, the Democratic and Republican parties do in the United States?
5. Compare and contrast the programs of the Kuomintang and the CCP. Which do you feel had a more realistic program?
6. What factors contributed to the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party in 1949?



## Suggested Readings

Bodde, Derk. *Peking Diary: A Year of Revolution 1948-1949*, New York: Fawcett, 1967.\*

Interesting eyewitness accounts of life in Peking immediately before and after the Communist takeover.

Chassin, Lionel Max. *The Communist Conquest of China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

An account of the period 1945-1949, including a brief survey of events following the 1911 Revolution and a succinct analysis of Kuomintang defeat and the victory of the CCP. Eleven maps.

Malraux, André. *The Conquerors*, Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1962.\*

A story of the Chinese revolution during the 1920's, written in 1929 and based upon the author's experiences at the headquarters of the Kuomintang in Canton. The Canton scene is depicted in a combination novel and official report set against a background of newspaper reports and written in journalistic style.

Mao Tse-tung. *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, New York: Bantam, 1967.\*

The American edition of "The Little Red Book," a collection of the thoughts and sayings of Mao Tse-tung with an introduction by A. Doak Barnett. A primary source for the study of the development of Communist thought in China.

Snow, Edgar. *Red Star Over China*, New York: Grove Press, 1961.\*

A classic, firsthand account of the formative years of the Chinese Communist movement as told by American journalist Edgar Snow.

White, Theodore H. and Jacoby, Annalee. *Thunder Out of China*, New York: Sloane, 1961.\*

A vital, moving eyewitness account of life in China during World War II commenting perceptively on the Chinese peasant in war and famine, American participation in the Sino-Japanese war, Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Government, the defeat of the Japanese, and the beginnings of the Civil War.

\*Paperbound Edition.



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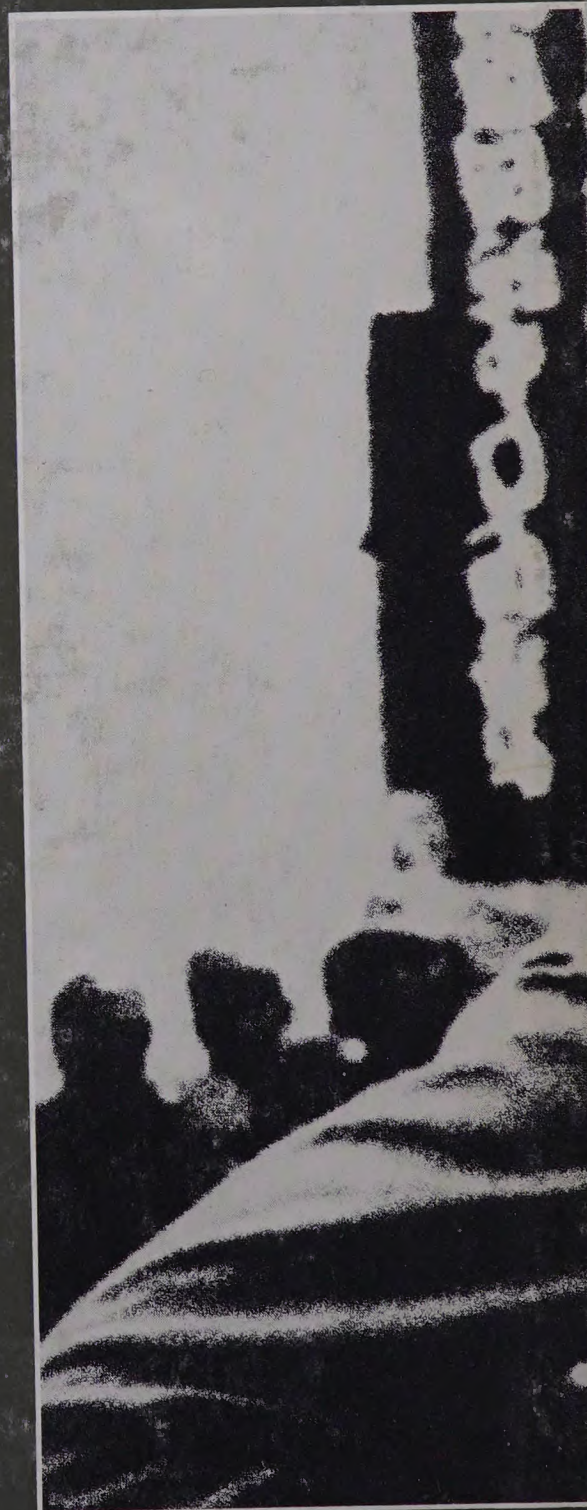
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